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MEMORANDUM

August 20, 1964

TO: Mr. Howard P. Willens
FROM: Burt W. Griffin
RE: Oswald Portions of the Foreign Conspiracy Chapter.

1. The Oswald conspiracy sub-parts seem more properly divided into political organizations and individuals as conspirators rather than as a foreign and domestic conspiracy. Contrary to its statement at the outset, the foreign conspiracy sub-part does not deal with possible allies of Oswald who were foreign nationals, either in the United States, Mexico or Cuba. It deals only with the Cuban and Soviet governments. Much of the "disproving evidence" which is amassed in connection with the governmental conspiracies has little probative value and the great weight of the argument comes from the conclusions that neither Cuba nor the U.S.S.R. had a real interest in the assassination, would be unlikely to use a defector as a secret agent and, if they did, Oswald would have been the worst possible agent. I think the governmental involvement can best be dealt with by marshalling in a compact section the pertinent facts to those three main premises. It also seems appropriate to direct some attention to particular individuals who might have maintained contact with Oswald on behalf of the Soviet government. Thus, Marina Oswald's possible function as a Soviet agent deserves particular attention, and her conduct deserves treatment in a single subsection. The chapter should also focus upon possible contacts between Oswald and persons he met through efforts to infiltrate the anti-Castro Cubans in New Orleans and Dallas, friends in Dallas and New Orleans or persons whom he contacted while in Mexico. Thereafter the investigative efforts to determine other facts should be detailed.

2. As this sub-chapter is written, the reader doesn't see Oswald as a person moving from experience to experience and, thus, one cannot appraise Oswald's activities apart from what is included in this sub-chapter. If a biographical portion were provided which detailed Oswald's activities from the time he entered the Soviet Union until he shot President Kennedy, the reader would get a view of Oswald as a man. The analytical portions of the conspiracy chapter could then be limited to the essential facts which grow out of that biography and would not have to take such lengths, as it does now, to lay-out a set of elaborate facts which are not particularly relevant to the ultimate conclusions. For example, it is most unlikely on its face that the Soviet Union would have recruited Oswald as an espionage agent when he was in Japan and then have him defect to Russia. Yet, considerable facts are included in that analysis as if they were relevant to the ultimate conclusion. Likewise, it is extremely unlikely that even after Oswald defected, the Soviet Union would have sent him back to the United States as a highly

regarded espionage agent; yet, much of the discussion in Chapter VI concerning Oswald and the Soviet Union seems to proceed on the premise that they would have done just that. By highlighting that biographical research as a part of an analysis of governmental activities we distort the basic importance of the materials. The best that any reasonable man could infer from all of the facts assembled in Chapter VI about activities in the Soviet Union, and perhaps from the facts that are omitted, is that after Oswald got to Russia, the Russians attempted to use him in some way and perhaps even regarded him as having some undisclosed use when he returned to the United States. But certainly their intent could not have been that he was to be a "Secret Agent." Rather than proceed on this secret agent premise, the chapter should attempt to explore the reasonable functions that Oswald could have performed in the United States for the Soviet Union and having determined those reasonable functions, the conspiracy chapter should show what examination has been conducted to confirm or refute whether or not Oswald was used for such "reasonable functions." One frame of reference that might be used is a discussion of how the Soviet Union induced other Americans to defect, what efforts were made to retain contact with defectors who returned to the United States; and how the Oswald situation compares.

3. It seems to me that the most reasonable situations under which Oswald might have had conspirators or might have been encouraged to shoot President Kennedy derive from his efforts to infiltrate the anti-Castro Cubans and to obtain a visa to Cuba. But even such contacts are unlikely to lead to a conspiracy to shoot the President which had the backing of a government or an organized group. Rather, the more reasonable possibilities are that Oswald met or became involved with some "adventurers" associated with an anti-Castro or pro-Castro group but that those "adventurers" were not acting with the support of the top leaders of the groups to which they belonged. To examine such possibilities the conspiracy chapter would require many more details on Oswald's efforts to infiltrate the anti-Castro Cubans in Dallas, would have to ascertain the identity of the unlocated individual who helped pass out the Fair Play for Cuba literature, should provide more details of Oswald's activities in Mexico from September 31 to October 3, and should explore at length the allegations made by Sylvia Odio. I have attached a copy of the domestic and foreign conspiracy chapters which contain specific comments about particular sections.

4. Chapters V, VI, VII, and VIII should be revised as follows:

Chapter V. - Liebel's: Biography plus appropriate other materials relevant to the Conspiracy Chapter so that there is a single chapter which can show how Oswald moved from episode to episode during the last three years of his life.

Chapter VI. - The Oswald Conspiracy Chapter as revised according to my previous comments.

Chapter VII. - Ruby's activities on November 22 to 24 and his possible role as a conspirator. (This might be the last part of Chapter VI although I think it is sufficiently distinct from Oswald's activities to justify as separate chapter.)

Chapter VIII. - The detention and protection of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Attach.

Griffin/jv/8-20-64
CC: Griffin chron file
Mr. Rankin
Mr. Billak
Mr. Slawson